Chapter Summary

Life During the Cold War

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
How does war result in change?
What challenges may countries face as a result of war?

The Cold War affected different parts of the world in different ways. Most Western European countries recovered rapidly from World War II. The United States experienced an economic boom, but faced serious social and political problems after the war. Stalin attempted to bring all of the countries in Eastern Europe under Soviet control, and largely succeeded, with the exceptions of Albania and Yugoslavia. From 1945–1952, Allied military forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur occupied Japan and remodeled Japanese society along Western lines. New economic powerhouses emerged in the Asian rim.

North America and Western Europe

- After World War II, with the help of the Marshall Plan, Western Europe recovered economically and established the European Economic Community, also known as the Common Market.
- In the 1960s and 1970s, the United States faced a range of difficult social and political issues, including the civil rights movement, anti-war protests, and the women’s liberation movement.
- During the Cold War, Western society changed as women sought equality in the workplace and young people began to express dissatisfaction over educational, political, and social issues.

Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

- The Soviet Union’s command economy emphasized heavy industry (the manufacture of machines and equipment for factories and mines), chiefly for military benefit, and there was a shortage of consumer goods.
- Stalin ruled through repression and political terror, and the government controlled all literary and scientific work.
- Khrushchev took steps to undo many of Stalin’s policies, but Khrushchev’s foreign policy failures, including placing missiles in Cuba, led to his removal from office.
- During Brezhnev’s rule there was a détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, and both countries agreed to limit nuclear arms.
- The Soviet Union gained control over much of Eastern Europe after World War II, although Albania and Yugoslavia remained independent.
- Many Eastern European satellite countries’ attempts at independence failed.

The Asian Rim

- After World War II, Japan made a dramatic economic recovery and emerged as an industrial power.
- Japan has become one of the world’s largest exporting countries.
- South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong—sometimes referred to as the "Asian tigers"—became economic powerhouses after World War II.
- Taiwan wants to retain its independence, but mainland China’s claims on Taiwan contribute to Taiwan’s uncertain future.
- After 150 years of British rule, Great Britain returned control of Hong Kong to mainland China in 1997.